

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 006455

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

HOLD FOR S/S TEAM, PASS TO SECRETARY

HEREWITH JEREMIAN O'LEARY NEWS ANALYSIS PIECE WASHINGTON
STAR-NEWS JANUARY 11 HEADED "OLD PROBLEM - FRESH APPROACH
TO PANAMA ISSUE"

IN ITS DEALINGS WITH PANAMA ON THE FUTURE OF THE
CANAL ZONE, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SEEMS FOREVER DOOMED TO
SOUNDING OPTIMISTIC FOR THE BENEFIT OF PANAMA AND PESSI-
MISTIC FOR THE BENEFIT OF CONGRESS.

THIS CALLS FOR A GOOD DEAL OF DIPLOMATIC DOUBLETALK,
AND SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER GAVE A BRA-
VURA PERFORMANCE OF IT AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY.
WHAT HE HAD TO OFFER WAS AN APPROACH TO THE CANAL QUESTION
THAT IS INNOVATIVE AND INTERESTING BUT DOES NOT COME CLOSE
TO PROVIDING A SOLUTION.

UNWILLING TO SEE THE ANTI-CONCESSION BLOC IN CONGRESS
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PAGE 02 STATE 006455

PREMATURELY AROUSED AND UNABLE TO ACT AS IF NOTHING

IMPORTANT HAD HAPPENED, KISSINGER CLIMBER UP ON HIS VERBAL TIGHT-ROPE. HE SAID TALKS THIS WEEK BETWEEN U.S. AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE ELLSWORTH BUNKER AND PANAMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER JUAN TACK REFLECTED A MODIFICATION BY BOTH SIDES. AND HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT ON A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES THAT COULD LEAD TO NEGOTIATIONS.

WHAT HAPPENED IS THAT THE CANNY SEPTUAGENARIAN, BUNKER, HAD WORKED OUT A NEW PROCEDURE FOR APPROACHING THE CANAL ZONE QUESTION. HE AND TACK ALSO HAD ISOLATED EIGHT POINTS ON WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY AN AGENDA FOR MANEUVERS THAT COULD GO ON FOR YEARS.

BUNKER HAD TAKEN AN INGENIOUS APPROACH TO TACK. INSTEAD OF STARTING WITH THE 1903 TREATY AND HAGGLING OVER IT WORD BY WORD AND SENTENCE BY SENTENCE, BUNKER SUGGESTED EARLIER THIS WEEK THAT THE NEGOTIATING TEAMS FORGET THE OLD TREATY AND TRY TO WORK OUT A SET OF PRINCIPLES FOR A BRAND NEW ONE.

TACK AND HIS BOSS, BRIG. GEN. OMAR TORRIJOS, BOUGHT THE IDEA. THEY AGREED ON EIGHT ITEMS FOR NEGOTIATION WITHOUT REGARD TO THE TREATY THAT IS SO HATEFUL TO PANAMA AND SO JEALOUSLY GUARDED BY THE PANAMA BLOC ON CAPITOL HILL. THE EIGHT SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION, FOR SOME REASON, ARE CLOSELY HELD IN WHAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT CALLS A "LIMITED DISTRIBUTION" PAPER, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE HARDLY NEW. THE NOVELTY IS IN THE APPROACH.

LOOSELY DESCRIBED, THE EIGHT AGENDA ITEMS ARE: A POSSIBLE SECOND CANAL, THE TIME LAPSE BEFORE PANAMA TAKES OVER THE ZONE AND THEN THE CANAL, THE U.S. PAYMENT, THE AMOUNT OF TERRITORY THE UNITED STATES WILL HAND OVER AT THE OUTSET, THE FUTURE OF THE U.S. MILITARY BASES, THE POLICE-COURT SITUATION INSIDE THE EXISTING ZONE, THE OPERATION OF THE CANAL AS A VITAL WATERWAY AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR PANAMA.

THE POINT IS THAT THE UNITED STATES LONG AGO AGREED TO REVISION OF THE RELATIONSHIP AND TO SCRAPPING THE 1903

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PAGE 03 STATE 006455

TREATY AND THE UNITED STATES LONG AGO SAID IT WOULD FULFILL PANAMA'S LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS AND RESPECT ITS SOVEREIGNTY. LAST MARCH, THE UNITED STATES AGREED IN WRITING TO ABROGATE THE 1903 TREATY, TO REJECT THE "PERPETUITY" OF THE U.S. ROLE AS SOVEREIGN IN THE ZONE, TO HAND OVER THE CANAL IN TIME, TO ELIMINATE THE U.S. CRIMINAL AND CIVIL JURISDICTION AND TO MAKE THE CANAL ZONE "DISAPPEAR" WHILE INCREASING SUBSTANTIALLY PANAMA'S

ANNUAL PAYMENT.

5#3 58:(8,& 098,5 43.-8, 5#3 -.3. PANAMA
WANTS CONTROL OF THE CANAL SOONER THAN THE UNITED STATES
IS READY TO GET OUT AND IT WANTS THE U.S. MILITARY TO
LEAVE, TOO. PANAMA IS WILLING TO LET THE UNITED STATES
STAY UNTIL 1994, WHILE THE UNITED STATES WANTS TO STAY
AT LEAST 50 YEARS.

IF THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD ITS WAY, THE PANAMA
QUESTION COULD PROBABLY BE RESOLVED WITHIN A YEAR. BUT
WASHINGTON IS MUCH MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT.

FIRST, THE BUNKER-TACK "PRINCIPLES" MUST MOVE
THROUGH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE EVERWARY
PANAMA BLOC IN CONGRESS.

IF THE "PRINCIPLES" SURVIVE SUCH HURDLES AS THE
PENTAGON AND CONGRESS CAN ERECT, THEN BUNKER AND TACK
CAN START WRITING A NEW TREATY. (END TEXT). RUSH

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